complaints relating to any aspect of the Department's functioning including the Public Distribution System. The Public Grievances' Redressal Cell has been provided with independent telephone, fax and e-mail facilities in addition to a facilitation counter to receive the public complaints. In order to attend to public complaints on priority, the Department has also designated senior officers of the Department as members of flying squad for conducting immediate and prompt enquiry whenever the need for it is felt. The Government of India also has appointed Area Officers to States/UTs to monitor the functioning of Public Distribution System including the complaints of diversion.

(d) and (e) The matter has been taken up with the State Governments and reviewed in a meeting of the State Food Secretaries first on 10.8.98 and subsequent discussions with representatives of the State Governments. Many States, while disagreeing with the estimates of diversion brought out in the study, recognized that leakages do take place. Several States stated that bogus ration cards were being weeded out in special drives. States like Tamil Nadu and Haryana have issued computerised ration cards with photograph of the head of family to prevent misuse. The State Governments have been requested to streamline their delivery system and to take steps to curb the diversion and to weed out the bogus units. The State Governments have been asked to adopt the Citizen's Charter that ensures the consumer's right to information.

Export of wheat

912. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to export wheat in view of the substantial increase in foodgrains stock;

(b) if so, the details of countries to which Government propose to export wheat and under what terms and conditions;

(c) the details of countries which have expressed their willingness to import wheat from India; and

(d) the total quantum of wheat exported *vis-a-vis* imported during the last three years, country-wise and year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (c) The stocks of wheat in the Central Pool are much in excess of the buffer stock norms. In view of the normal wheat crop, liquidation of excess wheat stocks has become necessary. Export of wheat can be one way of liquidating the stocks. Enquiries regarding import of wheat have been received from Iraq, Russia, Nepal and Mauritius.

Government had, in 1999, decided to supply 50,000 MTs. of wheat from the Central Pool to His Majesty's Government of Nepal on Government to Government basis, at rates not lower than the Food Corporation of India's (FCIs) Open Market Sales Schemes (OMSS) rates. However, they have lifted only 906 tonnes of wheat so far. Ruling prices of wheat in India being very high compared to the international prices, the export potential of Indian wheat is extremely bleak. As a result, export deal with no other country could so far be clinched.

(d) The details of import and export of wheat on Government account during the last three years are as under:

Import of wheat

Year	Country	Quantity (in lakh tones)
1996-97	Australia	13.90
	Canada	2.66
	Argentina	0.95
		17.51

Import of wheat		
Year	Country	Quantity (in lakh tones)
1997-98	Australia	10.18
1998-99	Australia	14.15
1999-2000	Nil	Nil

There has been no commercial export of wheat on Government account during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998—99. During 1999-2000 a meagre quantity of 906 MTs of wheat has been lifted by the authorised nomineee of the Government of Nepal against 50,000 MTs, Allocated to Nepal.

Poor quality of commodities at FPS

913. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the poor quality of ration items and sugar available in Fair Price Shops; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to improve the quality of ration items particularly rice, wheat and sugar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI